

Benefits of Becoming a Title I Schoolwide Program School: An LEA Resource

The Schoolwide Program School (SWP) authority under Title I can provide a strong instructional and organizational foundation for eligible Title I schools. By allowing schools to integrate their programs, strategies, and resources, Title I Schoolwide Program Schools are afforded increased flexibility to benefit the entire school.

SWPs Promote Comprehensive Reform and Continuous Improvement. The Schoolwide Program law requires a school to re-examine its entire instructional and organization design in an effort to help all children achieve high standards. The nine (9) research-based, school reform components are the basis for reform in the Schoolwide Program School. These components respond to a solid research base about what makes schools work for disadvantaged students. Repeated findings show that:

- for the lowest achieving students in the highest poverty schools to meet high standards of performance, their entire instructional program, not just a separate Title I program, must be substantially improved;
- educators in highly successful schools expect high academic achievement from every child; and
- when an entire school is the target of change, schools serving the most disadvantaged youth can achieve success.

SWPs Require an Upgrade of the Entire Instructional Program. Schoolwide Programs focus on integrating students into the complete school program rather than pulling them out of the regular classroom for special assistance. Therefore, a school that decides to implement a Schoolwide Program will not be required to target or even identify certain students as eligible for schoolwide services. The goal of Schoolwide Programs is to assist Title I students by improving the instructional program of the entire school without targeting assistance to specified student groups in a disjointed, compartmentalized fashion.

SWPs Target High Poverty Schools. SWP research further shows that school poverty itself has a detrimental effect on student performance over and above the influence of the student's own family poverty. Title I law, therefore, allows a school to qualify as a Schoolwide Program School if it has a poverty index of at least 40 percent.

SWPs are Afforded Flexibility in the Use of Funds. The current law permits the LEA to use Title I funds, in combination with other federal, state, and local funds, to upgrade the entire educational program in a school as long as the intent and purpose of each program are met. Federal education funds that are included in the schoolwide plan do not have to be accounted for separately at the school level and may be used collaboratively with state and local funds. There is a single comprehensive budget that does not distinguish funding sources. Though federal funds lose their identity at the school level, proper accounting must be maintained at the district level for state level reporting. For further discussion, see [Combining Funds in a Schoolwide Program](#).

SWPs Promote Enhanced Collaboration Among Program Administrators. Because a schoolwide plan may be funded using a number of sources, administrators of those sources (programs) become "automatic" stakeholders in the school's reform initiative. Joint

involvement and planning should contribute to the most efficient use of human, fiscal, and material resources. Two critical areas that most often benefit from collaboration among program administrators are: 1) the development of a comprehensive needs assessment and, 2) an examination of duplication of services.

Combining Funds in a Schoolwide Program

Title I law allows Schoolwide Program Schools to use funds from Title I, Part A, and other federal education program funds and resources to upgrade the entire educational program of the school in order to raise academic achievement for all students. This contrasts with a Title I Targeted Assistance School where Title I funds are used only for supplementary educational services for eligible children who are failing or are at risk of failing to meet state standards.

Flexibility in Spending Title I, Part A, Funds. Schoolwide Program Schools have great latitude in determining how to spend their Title I, Part A, funds. Therefore, Schoolwide Program Schools do not have to do the following: 1) identify particular children as eligible for services; 2) show that Part A services are paying for supplemental services that would otherwise not be provided; or 3) separately track federal dollars. Instead, Schoolwide Program Schools can use Title I, Part A, funds in a variety of innovative ways, as long as those schools engage in reform strategies that increase the amount and quality of learning time and help provide a high-quality curriculum for all children.

Flexibility to Combine Other Federal Funds to Support the Schoolwide Program.

Schoolwide Program Schools may use funds from most other federal education programs to upgrade the entire educational program. Though the authority to combine funds in a Schoolwide Program School extends to most federal programs, this authority by law does not extend to the following programs:

- funds provided under the Schools Facilities Infrastructure Act;
- programs under Title I, Part D, Subpart 1—Neglected or Delinquent (unless funds are used for transition services involving the Schoolwide Program School);
- programs under the Adult Education Act (unless adult literacy services are integrated within a schoolwide plan;
- funds awarded to institutions of higher education (unless those funds support elementary or secondary schools);
- National School Lunch; and
- Head Start.

Special Note: As of June 4, 1997, Individuals with Disabilities Act [IDEA-B- [name at that time]] funds were authorized to be combined in a Schoolwide Program budget, but the amount of funds that may be combined is restricted to the proportion of funding for students with disabilities attending the Schoolwide Program School.

A Schoolwide Program School that combines funds from other federal programs, with the exceptions noted above, is indeed freed from most regulatory requirements of those programs provided the intent and purpose of those programs are met. The school and the LEA, however, must still comply with certain specific requirements applicable to those programs, as appropriate. These include:

- health and safety requirements;
- civil rights requirements;
- gender equity requirements;
- participation and involvement of parents and students;
- private schools;
- maintenance of effort;
- comparability of services; and
- requirements to use federal funds to supplement, not supplant non-federal funds.

Meeting the Intent and Purpose of Programs in the Combined Budget. A Schoolwide Program School must meet the intent and purpose of the programs from which funds have been combined to ensure the needs of the intended beneficiaries of those programs are addressed. The comprehensive school plan, therefore, must include sufficient activities to reasonably address those needs, but the school need not document that it used funds from a particular program to meet the specific intent and purpose of that program.